



VOICEMAIL



CHORUS COLLABORATIONS FOR THE NEW SEASON

One of the pandemic's many lessons is how connected we are, and how crises can be weathered "with a little help from my friends," to quote Lennon & McCartney. In this new season we'll show the Chorus not merely 'getting by' but positively blooming as we collaborate with



some of our area's leading keyboard and string players. Don't worry, our *a cappella* trademark isn't neglected – Concert V will feature the Vespers of Tchaikovsky (no instruments there!) – but in other programs we'll actually return to our roots, when in the 1950s our founder **Ronald Arnatt** conceived of a top-class ensemble to present works more 'chamber' than symphonic in nature. For most of you this will be the first opportunity to hear this outstanding choir tackle selections that normally lie outside its chosen repertoire.

Canonical works, such as the Fauré *Requiem*, Kodály's *Missa Brevis* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*, will be complemented with less known but engaging works from Brahms, Mendelssohn and Elgar. Each program will confirm that our commitment to women composers remains strong, with familiar friends like **Melissa Dunphy**, **Clare Maclean** and **Sasha Johnson Manning** represented in the repertoire, together with recent works from **Elaine Hagenberg** and **Dobrinka Tabakova**. And we continue to champion new music; among several commissions will be a new suite of carols from **Mårten Jansson** who – COVID permitting – will fly here from Sweden for the premiere.

To return to a 'new normal' I've selected six of our favorite venues in which to present this repertoire. Most are large spaces with excellent sight lines and acoustics and are blessed with a physical beauty that will only enhance our singing.

You may notice a few new faces among the performers, but for the most part this is the same choir that enthralled audiences two years ago. I mention that statistic in case masks are required and thus faces slightly obscured. For your reference, I will be the person in front, waving my arms somewhat hysterically.

Philip Barnes

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THE
SAINT LOUIS
CHAMBER
CHORUS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - WELCOME TO OUR 66TH SEASON!

We are excited to sing together again! And we are excited to sing together **for you!**

We know that the pandemic will bring more surprises and that we will have to adjust to new facts as we go through the year, but we hope that those adjustments will be relatively minor. We will pay attention to CDC recommendations and honor any restrictions that some of our venues may require. We will try to minimize the adjustments and, if they affect you, the audience, we will do our best to communicate them to you in advance and to work with you.

We'll communicate updates in several ways. Watch for emails from us - don't just watch for them, but please read them as well! You may receive actual letters from us with current information and don't forget to visit

our website, especially just before a concert. We'll try to have the best and most important news ready and available for you there. For your information, all the singers and board members have been fully vaccinated, and we will continue to take many steps to protect each other during rehearsals and concerts.

Philip has described the upcoming season on the front page of this issue. We hope you will enjoy the entire season and share the joy of live music with us in beautiful settings with different levels of reverberation, different depths of sound and different visual impacts.

Welcome. We are very grateful for you and for what you add to the live concert experience!

Dick Brickson

DIANA UMALI - PERFORMER, TEACHER AND ACCOMPANIST

SLCC welcomes its newest rehearsal accompanist!



Diana was born and raised in St. Louis. She started piano lessons when she was five years old but considered it mostly a hobby. Although she accompanied her high school choir at Cor Jesu Academy in South County, she hadn't really considered a musical career.

She went to Saint Louis University graduating summa cum laude with a B.A. in music performance and a B.S. in finance. Diana's parents, who emigrated from the Philippines in the 1970s, were both accountants, so a business degree made sense at the time, although she says she hasn't done much with it! She obtained her master's degree in piano performance with an emphasis in accompanying/chamber music from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in May 2006. After graduation, Diana taught music at Saint Louis University and East Central College in Union, Mo.

Diana recalls her first experience with the St. Louis Chamber Chorus. "I was asked to substitute for accompanist **Martha Shaffer** for one rehearsal. She sent me the music ahead of time so I could prepare. I remember looking at the scores and thinking, 'Eight-part open score? Yikes.' It felt like I was back in school again learning how to read this type of choral music." Of the rehearsal, Diana said several words came to mind - intense, challenging, musically rewarding. The singers were focused, but there was an air of camaraderie that put her at ease.

Over the next few years, Diana heard from fellow musicians who sang with the Chorus about their positive experiences, as well as the group's diverse repertoire. She met SLCC assistant conductor **Andrew Jensen** when they both began their teaching tenures at Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) in the fall of 2011. "Andy kept the Chamber

Chorus on my radar," Diana said. "He would talk about upcoming concerts, and I met some of the current Chorus members because of their participation in Andy's group, the No-Name Chorale. It's wonderful to see how much enthusiasm there is in the chorale community."

At SWIC, Diana teaches group piano classes, applied piano lessons and general music education courses including Music Appreciation, World Music and Fundamentals of Music. "World Music is something that I especially enjoy," she said. "I was bit by the travel bug within the last decade, so one of the key things we try to plan into our vacations is hearing live music in other countries." A recent trip to New Zealand included a night out at a pub with live music and "maybe a pint or two of beer." One of her most memorable travel moments was visiting the Musical Instruments Museum in Phoenix, Ariz. "It was such an incredible experience - almost overwhelming - to see so many instruments from all over the world, especially for someone who spends time mainly with just one instrument."

As a collaborative pianist, Diana enjoys playing chamber music with other St. Louis musicians including the Perseid String Quartet. She co-founded the Linjadi Trio in 2012 with cellist **James Nacy** and violinist **Lindsey Miller Jones**. She also serves on the music staff at First United Presbyterian Church in Belleville, Ill., and has served as adjudicator for local music festivals.

Diana and her husband **Adam Hucke** (a fellow musician and lapidary enthusiast) enjoy cooking together, as well as spending time with their two dogs. She likes to spend her spare time reading, puzzling and jogging around Tower Grove Park, where she and Adam are renovating their century-old home. This summer, in lieu of international travel, she began studying Portuguese and learning how to make homemade pasta, using eggs from her chickens.

Gill Waltman

DANIEL RUDER – AUDIO ENGINEER ... AND BUILDING RESTORER



Daniel was born and raised in St. Louis and has lived here for most of his life. He was raised by public school teachers and is the only member of his family (two parents, two sisters) without a degree in Education. Despite this, he's been an adjunct faculty member at Webster

University in the Department of Audio Aesthetics and Technology since 2007.

In 2010, he was asked to record a Chamber Chorus concert after his mentor and former Webster colleague, **Barry Hufker**, had stepped down as the longtime sound engineer. That concert recording was successful, and since then Daniel has recorded almost every concert and album for the Chorus.

Since 2010, Daniel has engineered over 50 concerts for the Chorus. Additionally, he has engineered on the Gary Cole-produced albums for Regent Records: *Christmas from St. Louis* (2011), *American Declarations* (2013), *St. Louis Firsts* (2015), *St. Louis Classics* (2017), and *St. Louis Premieres* (2019).

Outside of his work with the Chorus, Daniel has recorded dozens of records and concerts for a wide variety of musicians. He's worked with everything from jazz, pop, metal, rock, and most things in between. For more than 10 years, he has taught a class at Webster that guides students through weekly recording sessions

with musicians of all stripes. Every week, a band or artist records live, in-studio. This class has connected him with a large rolodex of talented and generous musicians throughout St. Louis. As any fan of the Chorus knows, St. Louis is home to a bevy of truly great musicians.

A few years ago, he and his partner **Shana Albright** (who volunteers at the front desk at many Chorus concerts) bought a building in south St. Louis to convert into a recording studio. The building, a former church-turned-social-club-turned-boxing-gym originally built in 1876, was in need of serious repair and they are just crazy enough to want to do it. The building was somewhat of a community meeting place –ask them about the Society of Spiritual Research, led by Reverend Elizabeth B. Price, which used the building in 1906. Or how often selectively-toothed former boxers love to stop by to regale them with reverent tales of violence. It's a big expensive project but Daniel sees it as his life's work.

Prior to quarantine, Daniel was working as a freelance AV Technician, which took him all over the country working on live events. When things went south in March of 2020, all that work completely dried up. After a few months of intensive work on the aforementioned building, he developed new skills and is now on his third house renovation as a contractor. However, he's looking forward to next season and getting back to working with music and musicians full time.

Gill Waltman

The History of *VoiceMail*

The first official newsletter of the SLCC appeared in October 2003 when **George Durnell** was board president. It was created by board member **Gill Waltman** who'd had some previous experience editing and producing newsletters. **Philip Barnes** had long wished for such a publication, but these can be expensive and time-consuming to produce. **Mary Jo Cannon**, a board member at the time, invented the clever title - *VoiceMail!* Initially, hard copies were distributed at three of the season's six concerts. Each one included news about the Chorus and featured one of the singers. More recently, we have alternated a soprano/tenor with an alto/bass pairing, allowing more singers to be featured.

When singer representative and graphic artist **Amanda Verbeck** joined the board, she offered her visual arts expertise to re-design the *VoiceMail*, producing a more professional-looking publication; the first new issue appeared in September 2008. Amanda also provided design layout for several CD covers and invitations and updated the Chamber Chorus website.

In 2019, **Ali Ruzicka** took over as graphic designer and an updated *VoiceMail* was distributed at the November 2019 and February 2020 concerts. Then the pandemic arrived, and the newsletter became electronic for the first time. Additional issues were prepared and circulated to subscribers and displayed on the website. Instead of singer highlights, articles were written about individual members of the supporting cast behind the scenes. Familiar hard copies could reappear next season as we revert to more 'normal' concert experiences.

Using a professional graphic artist for the design and final layout of the articles and photos provides a more polished publication and allows more time for the editor to concentrate on soliciting articles and photographs for upcoming issues. Profuse thanks to Amanda and Ali for their professional contributions and to all who submit articles for publication. If you have ideas for new topics, please let us know!

Gill Waltman

NOTEWORTHY NOTES

REMEMBERING JIM DOYLE - MORNING RADIO HOST

As many of you will recall, we recently bid farewell to a beloved friend of the Chorus, **John Clayton**, who died in early July. Shortly afterwards, followers of St. Louis classical radio received another shock with the news that **Jim Doyle** had suddenly passed away. Jim was a fixture of morning radio, hosting the drive-time show on Classic 107.3. During his years on the air Jim helped the Chorus on numerous occasions, interviewing our visiting composers as well as artistic director, **Philip Barnes**. To his widow Ann and son Seamus the Chorus sends its condolences.

MONDAY NIGHT REHEARSALS MOVE TO URSULINE ACADEMY

For nearly three decades the Chorus has enjoyed the hospitality of St. Peter's Church, Ladue, whose members have generously allowed us to use its choir room for auditions and rehearsals. To the Rector, Director of Music, and Vestry we express our sincere gratitude.

A fresh chapter begins this season as we move to Ursuline Academy to begin a partnership in which we can benefit from facilities that include a new rehearsal space and a 'classic' chapel. UA students will be welcomed to our practices and be able to engage with our conductors and visiting composers. This initiative between the school and the ensemble affirms our mission "not only to entertain, but to educate and inspire." For the Chamber Chorus, its future adult members are today's high school students, and so this new partnership is not only altruistic but also practical. We thank President **Peggy Slater**, and **Jay Harkey**, the Choir Director, for their vision and generosity in welcoming the Chamber Chorus to Ursuline Academy.

SLCC INTRODUCES NEW ACCOMPANIST

Among the new faces we will be seeing as part of the upcoming season of instrumental collaborations will be performances by pianist **Diana Umali**, our new SLCC rehearsal accompanist. She follows two gifted accompanists in recent SLCC history, **Martha Shaffer** and **Lansin Lim Kimler**. We welcome Diana to the Chorus. See the article about her on page 2.

SLCC SOUND ARCHIVE

Over the past year, while selecting recorded music by the Chorus to use in the season's presentations, artistic director **Philip Barnes** collected and documented the entire archived recordings from the past 65 years by the Chorus - a huge undertaking! This collection represents the complete sound archive of the Chorus, containing all recorded performances and CDs. He loaded them onto a tiny thumb drive which he handed off to Board member **Ron Gines** at the last presentation. Philip has entrusted Ron, who is technically savvy, to convert this precious archive and upload it to the Cloud for posterity.

SLCC COVID SAFETY PLAN

With the ever-changing conditions associated with Covid, we are being mindful to create a safe environment for our audience and singers. Please go to www.chamberchorus.org/covid-safety-plan to read about our current covid restrictions. We must follow the Covid policies of the venues where we are performing, so please check our website throughout the season. We will continue to adapt our mask and vaccination policies with the recommendations of the CDC, local government, and venue requirements.

TICKET SALE INFORMATION

Subscriptions and individual concert tickets are on sale now for the Chamber Chorus' 66th season, *Pastime with Good Company* (See links to ticket sales below.) On the front page, **Philip Barnes** has described the upcoming season in which collaboration underpins every performance. (See the link below to the current season page.) And we go back 'on the road' to explore some of St. Louis's best acoustics in six spectacular venues.

Useful links:

Subscriptions

www.chamberchorus.org/subscriptions

Tickets - www.chamberchorus.org/tickets

Current Season

www.chamberchorus.org/current-season

Covid Safety Plan

www.chamberchorus.org/covid-safety-plan

For more information about concerts, tickets or auditions:

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Graphic Designer, Ali Ruzicka

Advance Ticket Purchases:

Buy tickets online at our website
www.chamberchorus.org

or contact Katie Sandquist,
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(636) 458-4343

For questions, comments or to submit ideas/articles for VoiceMail newsletter:

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